

# THE MEETING OF PETER AND PAUL IN ROME: AN EMBLEMATIC NARRATIVE OF SPIRITUAL BROTHERHOOD

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**A**t Monreale (Fig. 1), as in the earlier mosaics of the Cappella Palatina in Palermo,<sup>1</sup> the canonical histories of Paul and Peter end with the Raising of Tabitha (Acts 9:36–42),<sup>2</sup> and the pictorial cycle continues with an epilogue based on extra-biblical legend. Peter meets Paul outside the walls of Rome; the apostles confront Simon Magus before Nero; and the two men debunk the sorcerer's magic. The apocryphal episodes splice the biographies of Peter and Paul pictured separately in the preceding mosaic sequences, in Palermo on the walls of the side aisles and at Monreale in matched chapels. The Bible and, therefore, the opening scenes of the apostolic cycles, have Peter and Paul leading quite separate lives; at times the apostles' divergent concepts of the Christian mission even bring them into harsh conflict with each other (see Gal. 2:7–14). By contrast, the apocryphal accounts of the apostles' lives<sup>3</sup> and depictions based on them reconcile the two men and present them working together in perfect concord.

The idea of apostolic harmony is stressed particularly in the opening episode of Peter and Paul Meeting. At Monreale the scene bears the titulus: HIC PAUL[US] VENIT ROMAM ET PACEM FE-

<sup>1</sup>Cf. O. Demus, *The Mosaics of Norman Sicily* (London, 1949), 46, 119, 294 ff and E. Kitzinger, *The Mosaics of Monreale* (Palermo, 1960), 33 ff.

<sup>2</sup>Peter's Release from Prison (Acts 12:4–10) is placed earlier in both series.

<sup>3</sup>The story is recounted in the *Passio sanctorum apostolorum Petri et Pauli* (Greek and Latin) and the Ποράξεις τῶν ἀγίων ἀποστόλων Πέτρου καὶ Παύλου; cf. R. Lipsius and M. Bonnet, *Acta Apostolorum Apocrypha*, I (Hildesheim, 1959), 118 ff and 178 ff and M. Erbetta, *Atti e leggende (Gli apocrifi del nuovo testamento*, II) (Casale Monferrato, 1966), 180 ff. The original was undoubtedly Greek and seems to have been compiled ca. 450–550 from earlier material. Cf. A. Rimoldi, "L'apostolo S. Pietro nella letteratura apocrifa di primi 6 secoli," *La scuola cattolica* 83 (1955), 196 ff.

CIT CUM PETRO;<sup>4</sup> but the words are hardly needed. The idea of *concordia apostolorum* is vividly expressed by the image itself. The two men rush toward one another, lock arms, and lean forward to kiss. Slight prominence is given to Peter in the overlapping of haloes and cheeks and the intertwining of arms; but the basic pictorial symmetry and solid pyramidal grouping emphatically express equality and unity.

The joint activities of the apostles depicted in the Sicilian churches attest to Peter's presence in Rome, about which the Bible is troublingly mute.<sup>5</sup> In the Book of Acts, Peter is last heard of in Jerusalem (15:7–11); and Paul, alone, is reported to have preached the Gospel in the pagan capital. The apocryphal literature, by contrast, asserts Peter's primacy in Rome; when Paul arrives, Peter is already in residence and in charge of an established congregation. This surely accounts for the popularity of the Peter and Paul sequence in the Latin West. Although the apocryphal accounts existed in both Greek and Latin versions and isolated images based on them appear in Byzantine art,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup>In Palermo the inscription, most of St. Peter's companion, and the building are replacements made in 1460. Cf. Demus, *Mosaics*, 70.

<sup>5</sup>Cf. D. O'Connor, *Peter in Rome* (New York, 1969) and J. M. Huskinson, *Concordia Apostolorum: Christian Propaganda at Rome in the Fourth Century*, BAR International Series 148 (Oxford, 1982).

<sup>6</sup>In the East the scene of the Meeting of Peter and Paul appears on a number of works of art:

(1) possibly an 8th-century Coptic textile in Leningrad; cf. M. Bystrikova, "Coptic Textile. Sixth to Eighth Centuries," *Soobščenija Gosudarstvennogo Ermitaža* 49 (1984), 58 f. I am grateful to Prof. Rainer Stichel for calling this to my attention.

(2) a 10th-century ivory in the Victoria and Albert Museum; cf. A. Goldschmidt and K. Weitzmann, *Die byzantinischen Elfenbeinskulpturen des X.–XIII. Jahrhunderts*, II (Berlin, 1934), 57 f and pl. xli.

the iconographic tradition perpetuated in the Sicilian mosaics is clearly western.<sup>7</sup> There can be little doubt about Ernst Kitzinger's conclusion that

(3) a 12th-century Psalter in Athens (National Library, Cod. 7); cf. A. Cutler, *The Aristocratic Psalters in Byzantium* (Paris, 1984), 15 and fig. 3. The miniature may refer to Ps. 132 (133): "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

(4) a 16th-century fresco in the Chapel of St. George in H. Paulos on Mt. Athos; cf. G. Valentini, "Sviluppi teologici nell'arte pittorica dell'Athos," *Le millénaire du Mont Athos 963–1963. Etudes et mélanges*, II (Venice, 1964), 193 and fig. 6.

(5) a number of Late Byzantine icons; cf. A. Baumstark, "Zur ersten Ausstellung für italo-byzantinische Kunst in Grottaferrata," *RQ* 19 (1905), 202 f and G. Ruzsa, "Quelques icônes du Musée des Arts Décoratifs à Budapest," *Byz* 54 (1984), 638 ff.

(6) the Mount Athos "Painter's Manual"; cf. P. Hetherington, *The "Painter's Manual" of Dionysius of Fourni* (London, 1974), 90.

<sup>7</sup> Demus, *Mosaics*, 297, incorrectly sought Byzantine prototypes for the imagery. Cf. A. Weis, "Ein Petruszyklus des 7. Jahrhunderts im Querschiff der Vatikanischen Basilika," *RQ* 58 (1963), 230 ff. The early western depictions of the apocryphal history of Peter and Paul include:

(1) mosaics in the oratory of John VII (705–707) in Old St. Peter's known through a 17th-century drawing (Vatican, Biblioteca, Cod. Barb. lat. 2733, fol. 89); cf. J. Wilpert, *Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten*, I (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1917), 399 f and fig. 136.

(2) the north apse of the monastery church of St. John's at Müstair (ca. 800); cf. G. de Francovich, "Il ciclo pittorico della chiesa di San Giovanni a Müstair nei Grigioni," *ArtL* 2 (1956), 28 ff.

(3) an imitation gem in the 9th-century Lorsch Gospels (fol. 7v); two figures, each labeled with a "P", move toward each other. Cf. W. Braunfels, *Das Lorscher Evangeliar* (Munich, 1965).

(4) the pallium of Queen Irmgard known from the *Epigrammata* of Sedulius Scottus (ca. 850); cf. Weis, *Petruszyklus*, 252 ff.

(5) tapestries given by Pope Leo IV to Old St. Peter's (847–855); cf. Weis, *Petruszyklus*, 260 ff.

(6) the Grotta di S. Michele ad Olevana (second half of 10th century); cf. R. Zuccaro, *Gli affreschi nella Grotta di San Michele ad Olevana sul Tuscano* (Rome, 1977).

(7) frescoes in the church of S. Pietro in Tuscania (second quarter of 12th century). Cf. C. A. Isermeyer, "Die mittelalterlichen Malereien der Kirche S. Pietro in Tuscania," *Kunstgeschichtliches Jahrbuch der Bibliotheca Hertziana* 2 (1938), 289 ff and O. Demus, *Romanische Wandmalerei* (Munich, 1968), 122.

(8) frescoes in S. Maria in Monte at Marcellina (12th century); cf. G. Matthiae, "Les fresques de Marcellina," *CahArch* 6 (1952), 71 ff.

(9) *Vitae et passiones apostolorum* (Munich, Staatsbibliothek, Cod. lat. 13074; last quarter of 12th century). Cf. A. Boeckler, *Die Regensburg-Prüfeninger Buchmalerei des XII. und XIII. Jahrhunderts* (Munich, 1924), 49 ff and E. Klemm, *Die romanischen Handschriften der Bayerischen Staatsbibliothek*, I (Wiesbaden, 1980), 68 ff.

(10) portal sculptures at Sessa Aurunca (ca. 1190–1200); cf. D. Glass, "The Archivolt Sculpture at Sessa Aurunca, *ArtB* 52 (1970), 19 ff.

(11) frescoes on the portico of Old St. Peter's (13th century). Cf. S. Waetzoldt, *Die Kopien des 17. Jahrhunderts nach Mosaiken und Wandmalereien in Rom* (Vienna-Munich, 1964), 66 f; J. T. Wollesen, *Die Fresken von San Piero a Grado bei Pisa* (Bad Oeynhausen, 1977); and R. Piccininni, "Sui cicli affrescati nel portico dell'antica Basilica Vaticana," in *Federico II e l'arte del duecento italiano*, II (Galatina, 1980), 33 ff.

(12) frescoes in S. Piero a Grado (early 14th century); cf. Wollesen, *Fresken*.

the source of the cycles was "Roman or at least Italian."<sup>8</sup>

In view of the special significance of the apocryphal story for Peter, it is understandable that most representations of the apostles' joint mission in Rome are attached to the life of the "prince of the apostles" and that many are in churches dedicated to him. What is surprising is that the earliest depiction of the scene of Peter and Paul Meeting occurs not in a Petrine ambience at all, but in a church dedicated to Paul, the basilica of St. Paul's Outside the Walls of Rome (Fig. 2).<sup>9</sup> There, the episode ended the long series of forty-two panels that, until it was destroyed by fire in 1823, adorned the north wall of the great fourth-century basilica.<sup>10</sup> Like the other scenes and the Old Testament series facing them across the nave, the Meeting is known principally through watercolors prepared ca. 1635 for Francesco Barberini (Vatican, Biblioteca, Cod. Barb. lat. 4406, fol. 126r), though it can also be discerned in an engraving of the nave elevation made for Nicola Maria Nicolai's publication in 1815.<sup>11</sup> Already severely damaged in the seventeenth century, the depiction can, nonetheless, be read easily. As in Monreale, Peter and Paul embrace each other at the center, watched by men at left and right. Wearing a blue mantle, as he does in earlier scenes, Paul enters from the right in St. Paul's, from the direction of the preceding narrative; Peter, clothed in golden brown, approaches from the entrance wall, from Rome.

Dating the St. Paul's fresco is complicated. Though the *opinio communis* holds that mid-fifth-century iconography underlies the imagery transmitted in the watercolors,<sup>12</sup> in fact the picture cycle probably originated even earlier, around A.D. 400, when the basilica seems to have been essentially

<sup>8</sup> Kitzinger, *Mosaics of Monreale*, 42.

<sup>9</sup> What seems to be a depiction of Peter and Paul Brought before Nero occurs on a 4th-century sarcophagus from Berja (Spain) in the Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid. Cf. G. Bovini, *I sarcofagi paleocristiani della Spagna* (Vatican City, 1954), 150 ff and fig. 57.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. J. Garber, *Wirkungen der frühchristlichen Gemäldezyklen der alten Peters- und Pauls-Basiliken in Rom* (Berlin-Vienna, 1918); Waetzoldt, *Kopien*, 55 ff; and P. Hetherington, *Pietro Cavallini* (London, 1979), 81 ff.

<sup>11</sup> *Della basilica di S. Paolo* (Rome, 1815). Unfortunately the scene is largely obscured by shadow. The arched gate, two gables of background architecture, and the heads of the apostles are discernable. The engraving indicates that the composition filled the entire space. The Barberini watercolor of this scene is smaller in scale than the others, but the engraving suggests that this was an aspect of the copy, not of the original.

<sup>12</sup> The arguments are presented in L. Eileen, *The Illustration of the Pauline Epistles* (Oxford, 1952), 4 ff.

finished. An Early Christian date for the scene of the Meeting is, in any case, supported by a carved ivory in Castellammare di Stabia, excavated between 1875 and 1879 beneath the cathedral, but first published only in 1962 (Fig. 3).<sup>13</sup> Most likely contemporary with the fifth-century objects found alongside it,<sup>14</sup> the ivory displays only the core image of the Meeting scene, Paul rushing in from the left to embrace Peter.<sup>15</sup> Some four hundred years younger than the next earliest depiction of the episode at Müstair (Fig. 8), the St. Paul's fresco and the Castellammare ivory root the imagery deeply in Italian soil.<sup>16</sup> At the same time they raise important questions about the origins of the iconography and the literary and artistic contexts that engendered it.

#### AN EMBLEM OF CONCORDIA FRATRUM

Described incorrectly as a comb or part of a small box, the Castellammare ivory in fact belonged to a belt buckle. At the right is a groove for the strap and two holes for fasteners; at the left is the cylindrical channel and pin holes for the missing hinged tongue and ring. Measuring 6.7 × 5 × .8 cms, the Castellammare ivory is, in size, identical to other late antique buckles,<sup>17</sup> most notably

<sup>13</sup> Now in the Antiquarium Stabiano. Although previously I had had reservations about the authenticity of the piece, which I knew only from the reproductions in published articles (cf. H. L. Kessler, "Scenes from the Acts of the Apostles on Some Early Christian Ivories," *Gesta* 18 [1979], 118 f), I am now confident that the ivory is genuine. I wish to thank Dottoressa Bonifacio, the Director of the Antiquarium, and Dottoressa Mascolo, the Curator, for permitting me to study the ivory outside the museum case. Cf. R. Jurlaro, "Un inedito avorio paleocristiano stabiese con le immagini degli Apostoli," *L'osservatore romano* 102, no. 2 (26 January 1962), 5; P. Testini, "L'abbraccio di Pietro e Paolo nell'arte cristiana," *ibid.*, 108, no. 148 (29–30 June 1968), 11; and idem, "L'iconografia degli apostoli Pietro e Paolo nelle cosiddette arti minori," *Studi di antichità cristiana* 28 (1969), 281 ff. The ivory was already noted in 1900 by G. Cosenza, "una piccola scoltura in avorio con due figure barbate che abbracciano"; "Raccolta di antichità Stabiane, Nota letta all'accademia," *Rendiconti di Reale Accademia*, ser. 2, 14 (1900), 157.

<sup>14</sup> Among these were coins of Constantine, Arcadius, Honorius, and Pulcheria which were sold by the custodian Rispoli. Cf. H. Stevenson, "Conférences du mois de novembre 1877 au mois de mai 1878," *Bulletin d'archéologie chrétienne*, 3rd ser., 4 (1879), 37.

<sup>15</sup> Jurlaro thought that Peter was tonsured. In fact, the figure is depicted with a full cap of hair.

<sup>16</sup> A terra sigillata object in a private German collection may also represent the Meeting of Peter and Paul, but the piece is too fragmentary to ascertain the iconography. Cf. F. Bejaoui, "Pierre et Paul sur de nouveaux fragments de céramique Africaine," *RACr* 60 (1984), 47 and fig. 2.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *DACL* 5.2 (Paris, 1923), cols. 1544 ff. That belts were part of ecclesiastical garb as early as 430 is attested by Pope Celestine's letter to the bishops of Vienne and Narbonne; PL 50, col. 431.

that of St. Caesarius in Arles.<sup>18</sup> The Meeting of Peter and Paul, a theme of joining, seems particularly appropriate for a belt buckle; but the subject was undoubtedly dictated by a different consideration. Making his way from Malta to Rome, Paul had set foot in Italy first at Pozzuoli, across the Bay of Naples from Castellammare. The apostolic meeting in Rome, which closely followed Paul's debarkation, must have been of special importance in the area.<sup>19</sup> This would also suggest that the ivory, unrelated stylistically to other carvings from the period, was produced locally.

That the image on the Castellammare ivory may refer to an event of local significance does not suggest that it was based on a written account; quite the contrary, it reinforces other indications that the iconography was an ad hoc creation. Presumably the story of Paul's arrival in Italy and the greeting in Rome would have been well known around Naples. Nothing in the rendering suggests a true narrative derivation; the image is entirely emblematic and is in fact based on a well-known visual convention.

The topos of two men moving toward each other and joining in an embrace served during the Tetrarchic period as an emblem of political harmony, for example, on the famous porphyry groups in Rome and Venice (Fig. 4) which show caesar and augustus approaching each other and embracing.<sup>20</sup> In the aulic context the motif of embrace signified *concordia fratrum* as an ideal of joint sovereignty; and this connotation adhered in other contexts, too. Thus, on a sixth-century ivory depicting the constellation Gemini (Trieste, Museo

<sup>18</sup> Cf. J. de Laurière, "Ceinture de saint Césaire, évêque d'Arles," *Congrès archéologique de France* 43, 867 ff, with an excellent reproduction of the buckle and its strap (opp. p. 872), and W. Volbach, *Elfeneinarbeiten der Spätantike und frühen Mittelalters* (Mainz am Rhein, 1976), 127.

<sup>19</sup> Both Jurlaro and Testini (above, note 13) identified the subject as Peter and Paul parting just before being martyred, an event described in the *Epistola Beati Dionisii Ariopagite de Morte Apostolorum Petri et Pauli ad Thymotheum*, ed. B. Mombrutius, *Sanctuarium* (ed. Monachi Solesmenses) (Paris, 1910), 354 ff. In fact, this text does not describe a final embrace, and the episode is known in art only from the 10th century; cf. note 6 above and G. Kaftal, *Iconography of the Saints in Tuscan Painting* (Florence, 1952), 811 and fig. 923.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. R. Delbrueck, *Antike Porphyrywerke* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1932), 84 ff and 91 ff and pls. 31–37; Testini, "Iconografia," 283; and M. Cagiano de Azevedo, "I cosiddetto tetrarchi di Venezia," *Commentari* 13 (1962), 160 ff. Ms. Louise Rice has pointed out to me that from the 15th century, at least, the Vatican sculptures were actually in Old St. Peter's, installed in the chapel of Sixtus IV (cf. G. Grimaldi, *Descrizione della Basilica antica di S. Pietro in Vaticano* [Vatican City, 1972], 91 f and fig. 34). Unfortunately, whether or not the carvings were in St. Peter's during the Early Christian period cannot be ascertained.

Civico; Fig. 5),<sup>21</sup> the pose of fraternal harmony is used to commemorate the sacrifice made by the divine brother so that he could be united with his mortal twin. Like caesar and augustus and Castor and Pollux, Peter and Paul were brothers in spirit, if not in fact; indeed, the *Acts of Peter and Paul* addresses Paul as ὁ ἀδελφὸς Πέτρου. Thus the apostles were represented through the pictorial topos of *concordia fratrum*.

In essence, then, the image on the Castellammare buckle is symbolic. Though it certainly was meant to recall the apostles' moment of reconciliation in Rome, the depiction conveyed even more emphatically the notion of *concordia apostolorum* so important in early church politics.<sup>22</sup> Using a motif frequently employed in late antique art to express the idea of a fraternal mission,<sup>23</sup> the image conveys a tenet of church history: that the Christian empire was established primarily through the combined efforts of the two chief apostles.

The same emblem forms the core of the fresco in St. Paul's (Fig. 2), and there it establishes even more complex associations. The scene of the Meeting—the final picture on the north wall—brings to a close the life of Paul (depicted in some forty episodes) and completes the entire biblical cycle that begins with Creation on the opposite wall. Brotherhood is a recurring theme in these cycles. It underlies much of the Old Testament series where discord among siblings—Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, and Joseph and his brothers—is a figure of the transfer of God's covenant from Israel to the Gentile peoples.<sup>24</sup> Only in the extended sequence devoted to Exodus do the frescoes present brothers in harmony. After debunking the tricks of an evil ruler's magicians, Moses and Aaron work together to secure the liberation of God's Chosen People.

The mission of Moses and Aaron also began with a scene of fraternal embrace (Fig. 6), which, undoubtedly, was to have been seen in connection

<sup>21</sup> Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 63 and Testini, "Iconografia," 283.

<sup>22</sup> Perhaps the most famous witness to this interest is the inscription of Pope Damasus set up ca. 370 in S. Sebastiano. Cf. J. Ruyschaert, "Pietro e Paolo in Prudenzio, Ausonio e Damaso," *L'osservatore romano* 148 (29–30 June 1968), 10 and Huskinson, *Concordia*, 36.

<sup>23</sup> From the 6th century its most common manifestation was in the Visitation of Mary and Elizabeth, the "cognatae" at the center of Christianity (Luke 1:36).

<sup>24</sup> Cf. H. L. Kessler, "Pictures as Scripture in Fifth-Century Churches," *Studia artium orientalis et occidentalis* 2 (1985), 35 ff and idem, "Passover in St. Peter's," *Journal of Jewish Art* 13 (1987) (in press).

with the apostolic meeting across the nave. Peter was often likened to Moses; in fact the parallelism between the founder of Christ's church and the great Old Testament lawgiver was a popular *topos* of fourth-century literature and art.<sup>25</sup> To associate Aaron, "Moses' mouthpiece," with the author of the Pauline epistles was also natural. Writing at the very moment the St. Paul's frescoes were being completed, Gaudentius of Brescia detailed the connection between the two prophets and two apostles:

[Petrus et Paulus] in vera fraternitate coniunxerit, unanimitatis vinculo copularit, ut etiam de ipsis rectissime praesumamus prophetico spiritus praedicatum: "Ecce quam bonum et quam jucundum, habitare fratres in unu" (Ps. 133). Sunt quidem Moyses et Aaron, de quibus dicitur fratres. Sunt Prophetae et Apostoli una doctrina, spiritu fratres. Sunt in nobis interior et exterior homo, si unum sapient, fratres. Sunt etiam Petrus et Paulus vere consanguinei fratres, quos una pariter fides proprii sanguines fecit communione germanos.<sup>26</sup>

And a hundred and fifty years later, the Roman poet Arator made the same point even more explicitly at the end of his paraphrase of the Acts of the Apostles:

Aegyptus mundi formam gerit: inde vocari  
Quae meruit ducibus plebs est commissa duobus  
In quibus officium fraternus nexuit ortus.  
Idola tot Romae, mundo collecta subacto  
Quae fuerant, tenebris obnoxia corda premebant;  
Liber et hic populus, quem vinxerat ante Pharao,  
Exuit Aegypti totidem ductoribus umbras  
Perque lavacra Dei, quae tunc mari egit imago,  
Vitae nactus iter caelestem repperit escam.  
His etiam germanus amor, quibus amplius actus  
Quam natura dedit, geminos quos edidit astris  
Non eadem tamen una dies, annique voluto  
Tempore sacravit repetitam passio lucem,  
Et tenet aeternam socialis gratia palmam.<sup>27</sup>

The Meeting of Moses and Aaron marks the beginning of the mission that brings the Old Testament story to a satisfactory conclusion in St. Paul's; it is a type of the Meeting of Peter and Paul with which the New Testament cycle closes. By using the motif of *concordia fratrum* for both episodes, the painters in St. Paul's linked the events to each other and wove a net of allegorical threads that gathered in the entire pictorial narrative. The con-

<sup>25</sup> Cf. C. Pietri, *Roma christiana* (Rome, 1976) and Huskinson, *Concordia*, 129 ff.

<sup>26</sup> *Tractatus XX. De Petro et Paulo*, 9 f; CSEL 68, 183.

<sup>27</sup> *De actibus apostolorum*, II, 1237 ff; CSEL 72, 148 f. It appears probable to me that, in composing his paraphrase, Arator was influenced by the Roman frescoes.



1. South wall of Peter Chapel, Cathedral of Monreale (photo: Alinari)



2. Watercolor copy of lost fresco in St. Paul's, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Barb. lat. 4406, fol. 126r (photo: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana)



3. Ivory belt buckle, Antiquarium, Castellammare di Stabia (photo: Soprintendenza Archeologica di Pompei)



4. Statue of Tetrarchs, S. Marco in Venice (photo: Fototeca Unione, Rome)



5. Ivory, Museo Civico, Trieste (photo: Alinari)



6. Watercolor copy of lost fresco in St. Paul's, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Cod. Barb. lat. 4406, fol. 54r (photo: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana)



7. Miniature, *Vitae et passiones apostolorum*, Staatsbibliothek, Munich, Cod. lat. 13074, fol. 15v (photo: Staatsbibliothek)



8. North apse, St. John's, Müstair  
(photo: B. Brenk)



9. Fresco on south transept wall, St. Peter's, Tuscania (photo: Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale)

flicts between brothers (Jew and Gentile), portrayed in the Genesis sequence, are resolved, first in the harmony demonstrated by Moses and Aaron working as one and then by the Apostle to the Jews and the Apostle to the Gentiles who join forces to establish the unified church.<sup>28</sup> The brilliance of the visual device is especially clear when the Roman fresco is compared with a literal rendering of the narrative text of the *Acts of Peter and Paul* in an illustrated manuscript (Munich, Bayerisches Staatsbibliothek, Cod. lat. 13074, fol. 15v; Fig. 7).<sup>29</sup> Every surface feature—Peter's presence in Rome, Paul's late arrival, and the joint mission—is portrayed in the miniature, but the idea of apostolic harmony is not presented effectively. The visual emblem of *concordia* in the Italian works conveys with vigor the essential significance in the encounter, the joining of Peter and Paul in a concerted mission; and it makes meaningful allusion to other such joinings, those of caesar and augustus, the Dioscuri,<sup>30</sup> and Moses and Aaron, the apostles' predecessors.

#### THE STORY OF FOUNDATION

Unlike the image on the Castellammare buckle, the scene in St. Paul's is set in a clear narrative context. Directly to the right of the Meeting, Paul is shown being attacked by a viper on Malta (Acts 28:1 ff); in the register above, the apostle is represented preaching in Rome (Acts 28:30 f). Even though it is not derived from the Bible account, then, the Meeting of Peter and Paul is presented in the frescoes as part of the canonical history. In this it is like certain apocryphal scenes included among the mosaics of S. Maria Maggiore<sup>31</sup> and on an early fifth-century ivory box from Rome now in the British Museum.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>28</sup> At S. Paolo the theme of the universal church of Jew and Gentile is stated once again on the triumphal arch, there in the guise of the Adoration of the Twenty-four Elders of the Apocalypse. Cf. S. Waetzoldt, "Zur Ikonographie des Triumphbogenmosaiks von St. Paul in Rom," *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Herzianae zu Ehren von Leo Brüns* (Munich, 1961), 19 ff.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. note 6 above. The emblematic iconography seems never to have crossed the Alps; it does not appear either in the Munich *Vitae* or in the Lorsch Gospels.

<sup>30</sup> Considered the new Castor and Pollux, Peter and Paul were deemed the Christian guardians of Rome; cf. Testini, "Iconografia," 283. A reference to the Dioscuri may be intended in the acclamation of Peter and Paul as the "nova sidera" in the inscription of Pope Damasus in S. Sebastiano; cf. Huskinson, *Concordia*, 36 and 82.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. B. Brenk, *Die frühchristlichen Mosaiken in S. Maria Maggiore zu Rom* (Wiesbaden, 1975), 27 ff and 77 ff.

<sup>32</sup> Volbach, *Elfenbeinarbeiten*, 83 and pl. 61, and Kessler, "Scenes from Acts," 109 ff.

To reinforce the sense of historical authenticity of the event the painter included witnesses in the picture. These recall the flanking crowds in other renderings of the episodes; but they are distinctly different. At Müstair (Fig. 8) and Tuscania (Fig. 9) the onlookers are simply the congregations of Jews and Gentiles to which the apostles are about to preach. Monreale (Fig. 1) is closer to St. Paul's; indeed, the pose and gesture of the companion at the left are virtually identical to those of the counterpart in the earlier fresco. But the mosaic, too, is different. In St. Paul's the witnesses are nimbed; and, most likely, they are to be identified as SS. Linus, Timothy, and Luke who, according to various texts, accompanied Paul in Rome.<sup>33</sup> To see the figure immediately behind Paul as Luke is particularly attractive; for Luke, who neglected to report the meeting with Peter in his Book of Acts, would here be shown making up for the omission by attesting to Peter's primacy. Whether or not one of the flanking figures is Luke, however, the pictured event, witnessed by three saints, served to emend the biblical narrative by integrating into the canonical sequence an episode taken from legend.<sup>34</sup>

The fact that the saintly witnesses in the portrayal of the Meeting in St. Paul's find neither specific textual analogues nor precise parallels in the later depictions of the Meeting suggests that the composition was, in fact, built up from the emblematic core motif and, with ad hoc additions, made to conform to the preceding narratives in the cycle. Though stimulated, perhaps, by oral tradition or by written apocrypha describing Paul's meeting with Peter, the image is essentially a pictorial invention created to express the idea of *concordia apostolorum*. Its introduction at the end of a canonical cycle of Paul's life made a rather subversive point, that Peter had already established a Christian community in Rome long before Paul arrived. Though Peter worked as a brother with Paul to establish the Christian empire, he was first and foremost.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Cf. F. X. Pöhlz, *Die Mitarbeiter des Weltapostels Paulus* (Regensburg, 1911), 103 ff. The 2nd-century *Acts of Paul* has Luke and Titus in Rome with Paul; cf. E. Hennecke, *New Testament Apocrypha*, II (Philadelphia, 1964), 383. The 5th-century *Acts of Titus* records the presence of Titus, Timothy, and Luke; cf. M. R. James, "The Acts of Titus and the Acts of Paul," *JTS* 6 (1905), 549 ff. Nimbed witnesses also appear in the two previous scenes in St. Paul's, both of which are set in Rome.

<sup>34</sup> The same extension of the *Acts* narrative occurs later in the British Library Bible Moralisée (Cod. Harley 1527), fols. 94v–98v. Cf. A. Laborde, *La Bible Moralisée illustrée* (Paris, 1911–27), III, pls. 565 ff.

<sup>35</sup> Ambrose made a similar point: "Nec Paulus inferior Petro,

Because of the implicit priority it bestows on Peter, the episode of the Meeting eventually came to be attached to Petrine iconography, through what appears to have been a gradual process. At Müstair (Fig. 8), where the meeting is placed beneath Peter of the *Traditio legis* in the apse, the essential equality of the two apostles is maintained. For to the right, beneath the portrait of Paul in the apse, Paul Preaching is given equal prominence; and the Simon Magus and martyrdom episodes in the lower registers emphasize both apostles more or less equally.<sup>36</sup> In fact, the Meeting of Peter and Paul is found in a specifically Petrine context for the first time only from the start of the twelfth century. The event is portrayed on the right wall of the presbytery in S. Pietro, Tuscania (Fig. 9),<sup>37</sup> where it is preceded by three Peter scenes taken from Acts—the Healing of the Lame Man, Peter in Prison, and Peter's Release<sup>38</sup>—and is followed by two episodes from the Simon Magus story. From that time on, the Meeting was frequently incorporated into Peter cycles, serving as the link between canonical and apocryphal histories at Palermo and Monreale, possibly at Marcellina, at Sessa Aurunca, and at S. Piero a Grado.<sup>39</sup>

quamvis ille Ecclesiae fundamentum, et hic sapiens architectus"; *De spiritu sancto*, II, 13, 158. Cf. Y. Congar, "S. Paul et l'autorité de l'église romaine d'après la tradition," *Analecta biblica* 17 (1963), 491 ff.

<sup>36</sup>In the earliest known representation of the Simon Magus legend, the mosaics of the John VII chapel in S. Pietro, on the other hand, the Meeting is absent. Peter's primacy in Rome is established by a different pictorial preface, three nearly identical scenes of the apostle preaching in Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome. Cf. Wilpert, *Mosaiken*, I, 399 f and fig. 136.

<sup>37</sup>Cf. note 7 above.

<sup>38</sup>The third scene is barely discernable. At the left is a large structure featuring a prominent door, certainly the prison, and at the right, Peter walking away from it.

<sup>39</sup>It is tempting to seek the source of the 12th/13th-century Petrine cycles in the "apsidae conjunctus paries ad septentriones . . . multis historiis B. Petrie musiveis" of St. Peter's (cf. Weis, *Petruszyklus*), especially as at Tuscania, Marcellina (re-oriented), and Monreale, the picture sequences also adorn walls to the right of the altar. Unfortunately too little is known about the St. Peter's mosaics to ascertain their precise date or even the presence in them of the Meeting or of the Simon Magus sequence. Weis may be right that the mosaics dated from the later 7th century. William Tronzo has recently put forth potent arguments that the Gospel frescoes on the north wall of Old St. Peter's must have originated sometime between the late 7th and mid-9th centuries, probably toward the earlier part of this period; see W. Tronzo, "The Prestige of Saint Peter's: Observations on the Function of Monumental Narrative Cycles in Italy," *Pictorial Narrative in Antiquity and the Middle Ages, Studies in the History of Art* 16 (1985), 93 ff. The dismantling of a Peter cycle in the nave (or of a New Testament series with many Peter episodes) to make room for Gospel frescoes may have been the impetus for mounting Peter mosaics in the north transept. Indeed, from the late 7th through the mid-9th centuries no fewer than eight campaigns were undertaken to introduce Peter imagery into the Vatican basilica. These certainly suggest an

#### EMBLEM AND NARRATIVE

Even after it found its canonical venue, the scene of the Meeting remained flexible, serving diverse purposes. In Byzantium the image of Peter and Paul embracing seems never to have been incorporated into a narrative sequence and, as far as can be determined, was usually meant to recall, not their first encounter, but rather the final meeting of the apostles before their martyrdoms, as recorded in the letter of Pseudo-Dionysius.<sup>40</sup> This is certainly the case on the London ivory, where the meeting is depicted beneath the Koimesis, and on the Late Byzantine icons, where the tender parting was intended to elicit compassion. Paul's encounter with Peter on his arrival in Italy, with its clear Roman implications, apparently did not interest Greek artists, even though it was recorded in the πορείας.

By the end of the thirteenth century, stimulated perhaps by imported Byzantine models, the final Meeting of the apostles also appeared in Italy; it was included as part of an extended martyrdom cycle in S. Costanza,<sup>41</sup> on a fourteenth-century panel in the Van Quasten Collection in Radensleben, and elsewhere.<sup>42</sup> As late as the sixteenth century the ultimate Meeting was pictured on a relief in the chapel on the spot of Peter's and Paul's last parting (now in the Museo della Via Ostiense).<sup>43</sup> The provenance of the relief and the accompanying inscription from the Pseudo-Dionysius letter leave no doubt that it refers to the final encounter, not to Paul's arrival in Rome; but the composition is nearly identical with the Castellammare ivory. The narrative context changed during more than a millennium, but the pictorial emblem remained constant.<sup>44</sup>

awareness that the great church lacked an important component of its decorative scheme and may well have been an attempt to compensate for the removal of an earlier nave cycle portraying the saint's life. Müstair seems to reflect a Roman model and hence to provide evidence for the existence of the imagery before A.D. 800. It was not until the 12th-century frescoes at Tuscania, however, that the episode was used as a hinge connecting Peter scenes based on Acts to episodes of the Simon Magus story. In the medieval examples the scene of Meeting retains an ad hoc character. The central motif of embrace is constant, but the number and type of witnesses vary and the setting changes.

<sup>40</sup>Cf. notes 6 and 19 above.

<sup>41</sup>Wilpert, *Mosaiken*, I, 314 ff.

<sup>42</sup>Cf. note 19 above.

<sup>43</sup>Cf. Testini, "Iconografia," 287 ff.

<sup>44</sup>The image of the meeting and kiss was used in various other narrative contexts as well: at S. Angelo in Formis it appears in the Meeting of the Hermits Paul and Anthony; on the Heribert Shrine in Cologne it occurs in the scene of the saint embracing King Henry.

Derived from a late antique convention for expressing *concordia fratrum*, the core image of the Meeting of Peter and Paul served to convey the idea of *concordia apostolorum* so important to the fourth- and fifth-century church.<sup>45</sup> While alluding to the historical meeting known through legend and texts, it functioned flexibly to make ties with other pictured events. Beginning with the St. Paul's fresco, the emblem of fraternal harmony was embedded in a clear narrative context, part of a Pauline sequence and the antitype of an episode from the Book of Exodus. At Müstair the Meeting is found in its classic position as part of a Simon Magus series, but Peter and Paul are still emphasized equally. The Romanesque churches of Lazio and Sicily locate the scene in its pivotal place in the Petrine narrative, while S. Costanza and other late medieval works transfer it to the martyrdom narrative. In Byzantium the Meeting remained an isolated emblem with no explicit narrative references.<sup>46</sup>

The textual sources of the Meeting parallel the pictorial history. The literary record, too, was formed progressively. The *Acts of Peter* (ca. A.D. 190) relates the Simon Magus story but does not describe the apostles' meeting.<sup>47</sup> The fifth- or sixth-century *Acts of Peter and Paul of the Pseudo-Marcellus*, which exists in Greek and Latin recensions, does narrate the meeting;<sup>48</sup> but the ninth-

<sup>45</sup> The same idea of *concordia*, worked out in different ways, underlay the enigmatic panel on the S. Sabina door (cf. G. Jeremias, *Die Holztür der Basilika S. Sabina in Rom* [Tübingen, 1980], 80 ff and pl. 68) and the lost fresco in S. Andrea Cata Barbara in Rome (cf. Waetzoldt, *Kopien*, fig. 16).

<sup>46</sup> The "Painter's Manual" describes the apostolic meeting *hors série*; cf. Hetherington, "Painter's Manual," 90.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. note 2 above.

<sup>48</sup> It is based on earlier sources, including the epigraph of Pope Damasus in S. Sebastiano in Rome. Cf. Rimoldi, "S. Pietro" (above, note 3), 208 and Hennecke, *Apocrypha*, II, 575.

century introduction to these *Acts* is still entirely Pauline, detailing the apostle's trip from Malta to Rome just prior to the meeting with Peter.<sup>49</sup> The sixth-century *Epistola S. Dionysii*, translated into Latin in the ninth century, describes the meeting before the martyrdoms, perhaps as a poignant counterpoise to the well-known encounter at the start of the apostolic mission.

Given the present state of knowledge of the text histories, it is impossible to derive the early depictions of the Meeting of Peter and Paul from any literary source. Indeed, the visual representations seem to predate the written ones.<sup>50</sup> The priority of artistic and literary sources appears, in any case, to be unimportant; the relationship between the two forms of rendering the story of the Meeting remained fluid and changing. In both text and picture the event was presented as a sign of fraternal reconciliation necessary to the foundation of the church. Artists understood the effectiveness of the core motif of the *concordia fratrum* and employed it variously to serve their needs. From the fifth century, when they first appear, to the sixteenth century, when the last known representation was made, depictions of the Meeting of Peter and Paul existed in both emblematic and narrative forms. In each, reference to the other extended the visual context and permitted the representation to serve diverse functions.

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<sup>49</sup> It is only in this introduction that the fraternal theme explicitly enters the text, when Paul is described as "Peter's brother."

<sup>50</sup> In this, the Meeting resembles the complex problem of Peter's Water Miracle. Cf. G. Stuhlfurth, *Die apokryphen Petrusgeschichten in der altchristlichen Kunst* (Berlin-Leipzig, 1925); Kessler, "Scenes from Acts," 109 ff; and Huskinson, *Concordia*, 3 ff.